United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1255
26 October 1992

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Joint talks between leaders of Chypriot Greek and Chypriot Turkish communities resume today at United Nations Headquarters.

+ The five members of Commission of Experts to consider information on violations of international humanitarian law in former Yugoslavia appointed by Secretary-General.

+ UNHCR appeals to the international community for sanctuary for ex-detainees in Yugoslavia.

+ Iraq condemns selective enforcement of Security Council resolutions in First Committee's general debate on Disarmament.

+ First-ever WHO Ministerial Conference on Malaria begins in Amsterdam, convened to give new impetus to global fight against deadly disease.

* * *

The joint talks which Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali initiated in August between the leaders of the Chypriot Greek and Chypriot Turkish communities resumed today at United Nations Headquarters.

In accordance with Security Council resolution 774 (1992) of 26 August, which followed those talks, the current round of joint meetings have as their objective the completion of work on an overall framework agreement, based on the entire Set of Ideas endorsed in the resolution. Under the resolution, the Council expressed its expectation that an overall framework settlement would be concluded in 1992 and that 1993 would be the transitional period during which the settlement would be implemented. The Council reaffirmed that the status quo in Cyprus was not acceptable and called on the Secretary-General to recommend alternative course of action if an agreement did not emerge from the talks convening in October.

Most of the countries contributing troops to the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), while acknowledging that a critical

(more)

moment has been reached in efforts to resolve the Cyprus problem, have recently called for a reduction in the resources committed to the Force, in view of the new peace-keeping operations to which they have been asked to contribute.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has announced the appointment of the five members to the Commission of Experts, created under Security Council resolution 780 (1992) earlier this month, to consider information from States on possible violations of international humanitarian law in former Yugoslavia. As President of the Commission, the Secretary-General has appointed Professor Fritz Kalshoven of the Netherlands. The four other appointees are Professor Cherif Bassiouni of Egypt; William Fenrick of Canada; Judge Keba Mbaye of Senegal; and Professor Torkel Opsahl of Norway.

Under its resolution, the Council asked all member States, relevant United Nations bodies, and relevant organizations to make information available within 30 days to assist the Commission in its work. The Commission will also act on any further information it may obtain through its own investigations on grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions being committed in former Yugoslavia.

In a separate development, the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina has urged the Security Council "to examine without delay" all information brought before it concerning the ban on military flights in that country. The call was made in a letter to the President of the Council, dated 23 October, signed by the Bosnian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Muhamed Sacirbey.

In a previous letter, dated 20 October, Ejub Ganic, Member of the Bosnian Presidency, informed the Council that the aggressor had "used helicopters to transport reinforcements and ammunition to northern Bosnia and Herzegovina. Helicopters of the type 'Gazela' were also used to launch rockets on the Government positions", the letter stated.
Document S/24709, S/24703

* * *

Pointing out that "release without refuge was a cruel half-measure", the United Nations High Commissionner for Refugees today renewed its appeal to the international community to open its doors to the thousands of detainees awaiting evacuation from camps in former Yugoslavia.

In a letter to Governments, Deputy High Commissioner, Douglas Stafford, noted that temporary safe haven must be found in third countries for the ex-prisoners, many of whom had been subjected to horrendous abuses and torture. The Government of Croatia, already burdened with a huge refugee population, had agreed to provide temporary transit facilities for the ex-detainees on condition that they eventually move on to third countries. Montenegro had also taken in some of the ex-detainees.

(more)

The United States advised UNHCR today that it would offer places for 1,000 and other places have been offered by Finland, Italy, Norway, New Zealand and Switzerland. However, the slowness of the international response has forced the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to suspend plans to begin the further evacuation of some 5,000 prisoners from Bosnian camps this week. ICRC officials said that so far they have interviewed nearly 7,000 prisoners in 26 detention camps throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Stafford appealed in his letter for places for both the victims and their wives and children whose support they needed for rebuilding their lives.

* * *

The representative of Iraq, in a statement to the First Committee (Political and Security) on Friday, 23 October, has condemned the "blatantly selective attitude and double standards" that were being used by certain countries in the enforcement of Security Council resolutions.

Said H. Hasan Al-Musawi said those countries called on Iraq to comply with Security Council resolutions dealing with the destruction of its weapons, while remaining silent on the implementation of other resolutions such as the one which called on Israel to place all its nuclear facilities under international safeguards. Iraq had never attempted to own nuclear weapons, its nuclear programme was purely for peaceful purposes, he said . The reason why his country, in the past, had not declared certain facilities was because of the 1981 attack by Israel which had destroyed an Iraqi nuclear reactor - already under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) - and because no one had given Iraq any guarantees that such an attack would not be repeated.

* * *

The first-ever Ministerial Conference on Malaria organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) began today in Amsterdam, convened to give new impetus to the global fight against the deadly disease.

According to a radio report from Geneva, malaria still kills more than one million people worldwide each year, despite years of struggle against the most deadly of the tropical diseases. Participants from over 100 countries -- including 55 Ministers of Health from malaria-endemic countries -- are attending the Conference to endorse a new strategy for controlling the disease.

The Conference is expected to adopt such a new strategy tomorrow, 27 October.

* *** *